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INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 5992
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0504
RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR 1178
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0583
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 7255
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1773
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J5 SEOUL KOR
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [KS](#) [KN](#) [TH](#)
SUBJECT: ROKG PREFERS REQUEST COME FROM UNHCR ON BANGKOK SIX

REF: A. STATE 62410

[1](#)B. SEOUL 1270
[1](#)C. SEOUL 1108

Classified By: POL M/C Joseph Y. Yun. Reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

[1](#)1. (C) On April 20, POL M/C delivered ref a demarche urging Seoul to reconsider its position and quickly allow a ROKG official to assist with the processing of the six North Koreans in Bangkok to Nam Gwan-pyo, Director General for Policy Planning in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Nam respnded that Seoul had instructed its Embassy in Bangkok to assist with identification checks, but also specified that (1) the interviews should be done at UNHCR facilities; (2) the ROKG Embassy official's identity should remain undisclosed; and (3) the ROKG wanted the assistance request to come from UNHCR.

[1](#)2. (C) Nam reiterated his point from Tuesday that the case of the Bangkok Six was different from what USG-ROKG discussions had foreseen (ref b). Seoul sought to avoid the impression that Seoul was working with Washington and NGOs to send North Koreans to America. It was working to establish mechanisms to discretely handle the matter and intended to be helpful. The case, however, raised sensitivities that persuaded the ROKG to wait for a UNHCR request.

[1](#)3. (C) Nam said the ROK-seconded individual at UNHCR would be available to assist however UNHCR decided. There was no reason for the ROKG to get involved in how UNHCR deployed detailed personnel. Nam confirmed that Seoul had passed the USG-provided biographic data to relevant ROKG authorities. The information was, of course, only a start; certainly not enough for any background determination, he said.

[1](#)4. (C) COMMENT: Seoul would be more likely to reconsider its position about requiring a UNHCR request if we demonstrated that we had exhausted all efforts to obtain UNHCR flexibility. It is the Embassy's view that our interlocutors have twofold concerns. First, they are concerned that any publicity of the ROKG role would trigger a negative reaction from Pyongyang with repercussions on a variety of North-South issues, including the ROK's efforts to account for South Koreans abducted by the North. Second, Seoul is worried about regional reactions -- including those from China, Mongolia, and Southeast Asia -- that could jeopardize the

existing North Korean refugee pipeline. These are
justifiable concerns. Embassy recommends the USG press the
UNHCR further before working another attempt to persuade the
ROKG. END COMMENT.
VERSHBOW